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Improving the performance of Public Hospitals in Greece

In order to improve the performance of hospitals within the National Health Service, the Ministry of Health of Greece should identify directions to improve the process, in particular by establishing sound, measurable indicators and set up effective feedback mechanisms.

Well-built primary care offers major opportunities for managing and treating the growing burden of chronic diseases. In this way, primary care bypasses the need for acute care services, including emergency medical services (EMS). Without primary care that plays a leading role in managing chronic diseases and avoiding acute care requirements in EMS, emergency departments happen to be unnecessarily congested and unsafe. Besides that the current system receives patients unnecessarily in hospitals.

Out-of-hours primary care networks, when located with emergency departments and hospitals, can provide primary care to treat for these acute care requests at evenings and weekends. Integrated hospital networks that bring highly specialized services and deal with

cases of lower complexity in medium to small hospitals can also help reduce pressure on emergency departments. Supporting people and their families in navigating these health services is a key element of high quality, human-focused integrated services.

This latest initiative to improve the transparency of public hospitals by making public a list of planned surgeries for all public hospitals and developing an e-government tool referred to as B.I. Health (Business Intelligence Health) is an important step in rehabilitating the system. The list of anonymous surgeries, using unique numbers and urgently classified, addresses the problem of bypassing the list and helps manage surgical programs, while B.I. Health itself includes features that focus on monitoring hospital activities and financial management.

Managing the current EMS congestion in Greece means understanding that strong primary care requires a network of providers and health facilities that are equipped, supported, motivated and trained to manage chronic, polypharmacy and diversity.

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